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A general history.—Many books have been written on separate periods of the world's history, but very few writers have attempted to give a connected story of economic development and the important factors which have been influential in determining national existence. The purpose and scope of a recent book¹ from the latter point of view are well described in the introduction:

All that has been done here is to trace, very simply, the line of economic development throughout the rise and fall of Empires, showing in closest connection with this theme the general principles of cause and effect, as one nation after another rises, comes to the front, and passes away into obscurity [p. v].

The book is divided into three parts. Section I deals with the empires of the ancient world, treating that stage of development which preceded the days of history and the ancient civilizations of the East, Egypt, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, Phoenicia, and Judea. The second section reviews the development of the medieval world, dealing, first, with those factors which contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire, second, with the rise and fall of the Empire of Islam and, third, with the rise and development of the many new nations which were formed from the scattered and lost tribes in Asia and Europe. In the third section, the discussion is devoted to the modern world which is distinguished from the ancient world on account of the rise of national feeling and the beginning of the expansion into the new world. Here are treated very briefly those forces which operated in the development and growth of the nations and those causes which disrupted Europe and began the period of discovery, exploration, and exploitation. The effects on Europe of the discovery and exploration of India and America are clearly outlined, and the methods by which the European states became great powers are described. The effects upon the world of the industrial revolution in England and of the political revolutions in France are clearly represented. In the closing chapter, the factors which precipitated the world-war are outlined.

The organization of the material and the style of the book make it serviceable for reference or textbook use.

Literature for commercial pupils.—In this age of specialization there is a tendency to organize courses in literature in such a manner that they may contribute directly toward the objectives of a special field. Commercial English classes have hitherto suffered from the lack of a carefully selected body of specialized reading material which would serve to emphasize the highest type of commercial ideals. In a recent book² by the president of Girard College, there is gathered a group of selections from famous literary authors which represent the highest type of commercial English.

¹ E. M. WILMOT-BUXTON, *A Short World History*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1921. Pp. viii+219. \$2.00.

² CHEESMAN A. HERRICK, *English Readings for Commercial Classes*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1921. Pp. 197.

The book contains selections from a number of early English authors, typical of which are "Piers Plowman" by Langland, "A Fourteenth Century Merchant" from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, "Cathay" by Maundeville, "Advantages of Commerce" by Hakluyt, and Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. The business and commercial elements in these early writings are outstanding. Later selections from Thomas Mun, Daniel Defoe, John Ruskin, Sir Arthur Helps, and John Lubbock are presented, illustrating their ideas of commercial activities.

In the latter half of the book the author cites essays and writings from some leading men of America. Among these are "Wealth and the Modern World" by Thomas Reed, "What We Mean by Business" by Harry Pratt Judson, *A Message to Garcia* by Elbert Hubbard, "The Choice of a Career and Rewards for Effort" by Grover Cleveland, "Education and Business Success" by William H. Taft, and "Who Sneers at Commerce" by Henry van Dyke.

The selections are remarkable for both content and literary value. They introduce the commercial student to the work of early English authors, illustrating their ideals and principles of commerce, and showing the evolution and development of ideal business principles. Later, through selections from American authors, the pupil gains an insight into the highest business ideals of the present age.

The work is worthy of consideration by anyone who is interested in this field. It will doubtless render a valuable contribution toward the standardization of English literature for commercial classes.

Suitable plays for the classroom.—Although teachers very generally realize the value of dramatic work in the high school, practical difficulties have prevented most schools from entering largely into this type of activity. A long step in the direction of overcoming some of these obstacles has been made by the publication of a high-school text¹ dealing with classroom interpretation of plays.

The purpose of the book is to make dramatic interpretation in the classroom an entirely practical phase of the English work of the high school. The author takes a broad educational view of this problem and suggests that a proper dramatic education is an important training for life, expressing himself as follows:

After all, the biggest thing in the lives of our boys and girls is going to be the task of being men and women, and any school study that deals with the workings of the human mind and heart is of the utmost value to them. To a certain extent we are all properly players in our daily lives [p. 264].

The book is divided into three parts. The first part consists of a discussion of the classroom interpretation of a play. The author's ideas as to "getting

¹ EDWIN VAN B. KNICKERBOCKER, *Plays for Classroom Interpretation*. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1921. Pp. xviii+264.